

INCORPORATING ART INTO INDIANA LIBRARIES

by Erica Bodnar



his edition of *Indiana Libraries* examines the ways in which art plays a role in libraries throughout Indiana. In doing so, it addresses questions regarding the role of the art librarian, the issues of bringing art into libraries, and the resources available in art librarianship, among others. Ultimately, this issue should encourage librarians to think of their space and collection in new and creative ways in order to bring art into all types of libraries.

The Frankfort Community Public Library (FCPL) exemplifies the successful integration of art into the library. With the 1988 expansion of the FCPL, Library Director Bill Caddell envisioned more than just an increase in square footage. He envisioned the FCPL as an art and cultural center for his community. Upon its completion, the expansion tripled the library's square footage and expanded the FCPL into a joint library/community center. The FCPL now encompasses a theatre, galleries, music room, studio space, coffee bar, and meeting rooms, in addition to the reading and research materials associated with the traditional public library.

The FCPL's Anna and Harlan Hubbard Gallery and the McKown Gallery both display artwork from the library's permanent collection and art from Indiana artists. Handmade furniture built by Konrad Juestel, an Austrian artist and woodworker who settled and worked in Indiana is featured throughout the building. The library also has a circulating art collection. Artwork in the circulating art collection is cataloged as traditional library materials and can be checked out. The Elizabeth O'Rear Skanta Theatre features a concert

series featuring local and international concerts and performances. The Clinton County Civic Theatre and the Children's Music Theatre also hold performances there.

In addition to providing display and performance space, the FCPL's Anna and Harlan Hubbard School of Living offers classes and workshops with the theme "We can make our life a work of art." The school strives to be responsive to community interests. It offers courses on basket making, painting, quilting, jewelry making, and cooking. By keeping programs small, the school is able to offer diverse courses that appeal to many interests.

The FCPL is also a good example of the expanding role of libraries within their community. According to Caddell, normally, a community of Frankfort's size would be unable to support separate theatres, museums, libraries, and studios. By combining these services into one cultural center, however, they can share staff and resources. The FCPL fulfills the traditional role of the public library well, but by expanding its programs and goals, the library better serves its small community.

I hope the Frankfort Community Public Library inspires librarians who wish to incorporate art into their libraries, and I urge you to read this edition of *Indiana Libraries* with an eye toward bringing art into your own library. Can a portion of your lobby be turned into gallery space where local artists can display their work? Can your auditorium host more community events or be opened to public use? How can your library work to feature local artists, writers, and musicians? What can you do to bring art into your community?